

ALINE P. ZOLDBROD: *Men, Women, and Infertility*. Lexington Books, New York, 1992, 256 pp., \$29.95.

*Men, Women, and Infertility* is intended to give therapists with no background in infertility an insight how both men and women feel about this complex issue, as well as some new therapeutic techniques for dealing with it. It is not slated as a beginner's primer, but intended for the trained therapist who does not specialize in infertility. Some new techniques are to be offered as patient-coping strategies.

The author certainly meets her first goal. The volume's overview of infertility is full and references are well documented. Zolbrod gives the reader a valuable insight into the feelings of both men and women and identifies potential emotional problems for these couples, including the impact of infertility on individual perceptions and sexuality.

However, the book falls short in crucial areas. The author emphasizes that her writing is for the trained therapist, yet many of her comments are pitched at the inexperienced student. For example, she warns that empathy is not enough for working with a patient, when every trained therapist understands that empathy and the therapeutic alliance is merely the starting point for any given treatment.

In the preface, Zolbrod says she works largely with a healthy, white middle-class population but fails to explain until Chapter 5 that the behavioral techniques she offers may not be appropriate for patients diagnosed with character disorders. It would have been far more helpful if the author had disclosed this information initially for the reader and not revealed it so casually in the text.

Finally, the author cautions the reader about the potential problem of "theoretical eclecticism in the text where she bounces between perspectives of feminism, behavioral medical psychology, and psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy and multimodal therapy." She is right, it *is* confusing. Nevertheless, much of the book is devoted to multimodal therapy at the expense of other modalities and the argument in support of this type of therapy is further downgraded because of sloppy editing.

The book is composed of three parts, and divided into 11 chapters plus an appendix. Part I, Introduction, notes that 12 percent of American couples of child-bearing age are infertile. It also cautions that if the problem is not resolved quickly, the patients can begin presenting emotions similar to those of patients with a chronic illness. The chapters provide the reader with a thoughtful introduction to the subject. However, in this section and, indeed, throughout the book, there are inappropriate therapy directives, such as the therapist "should" or "must." Unfortunately, references as well as explanations are often duplicated.

There are also judgmental references about the differences between men and women that are ill-founded, and even offensive. For example: "Yes, there was a power struggle in marriage over when to have children, but there are plenty of power struggles in marriage (and granted, men have superior power and may win more than their share of these struggles)."

Part II *Losses across the Personality, Taking a MultiModal (MMT) Perspective on Infertility*, introduces the reader to MMT, Imagery, and explores the realm of

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somatic complaints. The section is adequate and the range of feelings associated with infertility—such as grief and envy—are dealt with using a cognitive, behavioral approach.

Part III *Sexuality* is handled sensitively and explores the distinct emotional reactions of a chronically infertile couple in the sexual realm. The author reviews issues including body shame, medical treatment experienced as rape, and further sexual problems as an aftermath of treatment as well as male reactions to the treatment.

In sum, the book rates a qualified commendation. While providing some initial insight into infertility for therapists who know little about it, the book lacks the sophisticated, in-depth analysis trained professionals require. The author appears to have a command over her subject matter. She gives a range of thoughtful and important points to the therapist who is about to work with these couples. However, inconsistent presentation and poor organization of the material makes for frustrating reading. Her use of male and female stereotypes is also troubling. It is a pity that the rich parts of the book are offset by the above drawbacks and a lack of specificity for the implementation of these techniques in a clinical setting.

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